

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, and 22-24 have been amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, and 31-35 are withdrawn.

Claims 8-14, and 16-29 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is requested.

ENTRY OF AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.116:

Applicants request entry of this Rule 116 Response because:

(a) the amendments were not earlier presented because Applicant believed in good faith that the cited prior art did not disclose the present invention as previously claimed;

(b) the amendment should not entail any further search by the Examiner since no new features are being added or no new issues are being raised that were not already present in at least one independent claim; and

(c) the amendment do not significantly alter the scope of the claims and place the application at least into a better form for purposes of appeal. No new features or new issues are being raised.

The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures sets forth in Section 714.12 that "any amendment that would place the case either in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal may be entered." Moreover, Section 714.13 sets forth that "the Proposed Amendment should be given sufficient consideration to determine whether the claims are in condition for allowance and/or whether the issues on appeal are simplified." The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures further articulates that the reason for any non-entry should be explained expressly in the Advisory Action.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS:

In the Office Action, at page 2, items 3 and 4, the Examiner objected to claims 23, and 16 to 29.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claim amendments overcome the Examiner's

objections.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112:

In the Office Action, at page 2, item 2, the Examiner rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth therein. The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

Amended claim 9 recites: "...wherein the first pressure is ~~relatively~~ higher than the second pressure.

Applicants respectfully submit that there is no limitation in claims 8 or 9 requiring that the supply of air at different pressures be simultaneous. Nor is there a limitation that excludes the first duct from supplying air at the second pressure or the second duct from supplying air at the first pressure.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is overcome.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

In the Office Action, at page 3, item 6, the Examiner rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hachiman et al. (Japanese patent publication No. 2002-85898 - hereinafter Hachiman et al.) in view of Taylor et al. (US 6,312,507 - hereinafter Taylor) or Sun et al. (US 6,447,731 - hereinafter Sun). The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

In the Office Action, at page 3, item 7, the Examiner rejected claims 13-14, and 16-24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dhaemers (US 5,546,678 - hereinafter Dhaemers) in view of Hachiman or Ferris (US 2,406,494 - hereinafter Ferris) and Taylor or Sun.

In the Office Action, at page 5, item 8, the Examiner rejected claim 29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dhaemers in view of Hachiman or Ferris and Taylor or Sun as applied to claim 16 above, and further in view of Eisen (US 5,940,988 - hereinafter Eisen) or Ou (US 5,555,640 - hereinafter Ou '640).

In the Office Action, at page 5, item 9, the Examiner rejected claims 8-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ou (US 5,755,040 – hereinafter Ou '040) in view of Hachiman or Ferris and Taylor or Sun.

In the Office Action, at page 6, item 10, the Examiner rejected claims 14, and 16-29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ou '040 in view of Dhaemers and Hachiman or Ferris and Taylor or Sun.

Amended, independent claim 8 recites: "...an ozone disposer to selectively remove ozone from air recirculated into the chamber."

Amended, independent claim 13 recites: "...an ozone disposer to selectively remove ozone from air recirculated into the chamber...."

And amended, independent claim 14 recites: "...a humidifier to selectively supply moisture to the chamber and the article of clothing; a heater to selectively supply heat to the chamber and the article of clothing; an ozonizer to selectively supply ozone to the chamber and the article of clothing when an automatically detected odor level of the article of clothing exceeds a reference odor value; and an ozone disposer to selectively remove ozone from air drawn from the chamber."

Initially, the Examiner appears to assert that the exhaust pump 5 of Hachiman and the outlet 17a of a Ferris correspond to the ozone disposer 216 of the subject application. Applicants respectfully disagree.

According to the DERWENT abstract of Hachiman, the exhaust pump 5 sucks air with force from dried articles and repeatedly supplies warm air and ozone air to drying tank 6. There is no indication that exhaust pump 5 removes ozone from air recirculated into the drying tank 6.

And the outlet 17a of Ferris merely exhausts air to the atmosphere. (See Ferris, at col. 2, lines 6-9).

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest "...an ozone disposer to selectively remove ozone from air recirculated into the chamber."

Additionally, with respect to claim 14, the Examiner appears to assert that Dhaemers discloses a humidifier that corresponds to humidifier 212 of the subject application. Applicants respectfully disagree.

In Dhaemers, there is no disclosed embodiment in which a humidifier is used in a clothes drying application. The only disclosure of a moisture producing system, such as a steamer or cool mist humidifier, are in association with use of the drying chamber 41 by people as a wet sauna. (See Dhaemers, at col. 3, lines 14-16, and col. 8, lines 31-33). Accordingly Applicants respectfully submit that Dhaemers teaches away from using a humidifier in a clothes drying

application.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that a prima facie case of obviousness has not been properly established. To establish a prima facie case of obviousness there must be a suggestion or motivation to combine reference teachings and the combined references must teach or suggest all the claims limitations. MPEP §2142.

The Examiner asserts that the motivation to combine of Dhaemers with Hachiman or Ferris is to sanitize clothes. But Dhaemers already discloses a means for removing odors and particulates, namely, filters 31, 32, 33, and 35. (See Dhaemers, e.g. at col. 4, lines 50-67). Dhaemers also discloses a pair of germicidal ultraviolet light fixtures 59 and 60, to sterilize or decontaminate air within chamber 41, and limit mold, fungus, virus, mildew, dry rot, and bacteria growth on articles to be dried. (See Dhaemers, at col. 5, lines 37-43).

Additionally, both Dhaemers and Ferris constantly exchange air with an external environment during operation. (See Dhaemers, e.g., at col. 4, lines 60-67, and See Ferris, e.g. at col. 2, lines 1-6). In contrast, Hachiman, as noted in the English translation of the Abstract (Patent Abstracts of Japan – submitted herewith in an IDS), air in the drying drum is discharged by exhaust pump 5 without the inhalation of outdoor air. And air in the materials to be dried is also removed, to minimize air held by the materials to be dried and the air in the drying drum. Figure 2 of the original Japanese version of Hachiman shows this operation. Thus, the combination as suggested by the Examiner would render either Dhaemers or Hachiman incapable of operating as intended.

As stated in the MPEP, "[t]he mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination." (See MPEP 2143.01). Applicants respectfully submit that there is no suggestion or motivation in Dhaemers, Hachiman, or Ferris to construct such a combination as suggested by the Examiner.

Further, amended, dependent claim 23 recites a sensor unit comprising: "...a humidity sensor; a gas sensor; a temperature sensor; and an ozone sensor."

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest an ozone sensor.

Further still, dependent claim 28 recites: "...wherein: the first duct is an internal duct; and the second duct is an external duct."

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references, alone or in combination,



CONCLUSION:

In accordance with the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the cited art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited. At a minimum, this Amendment should be entered at least for purposes of Appeal as it either clarifies and/or narrows the issues for consideration by the Board.

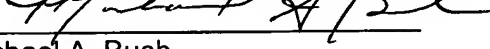
If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited and possibly concluded by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss any such remaining issues.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: July 11, 2005

By: 
Michael A. Bush
Registration No. 48,893

1201 New York Ave, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501